

Travel Warning

United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520

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AFGHANISTAN

November 15, 2004

This Travel Warning provides updated information on the security situation in Afghanistan and on the upcoming Afghan presidential inauguration events. The security threat to all American citizens in Afghanistan remains critical. This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Afghanistan issued July 30, 2004.

The Department of State strongly warns U.S. citizens against travel to Afghanistan. There is an ongoing threat to kidnap and assassinate U.S. citizens and non- Governmental organization (NGO) workers throughout the country. The ability of Afghan authorities to maintain order and ensure the security of citizens and visitors is limited. Remnants of the former Taliban regime and the terrorist al-Qaida network, and other groups hostile to the government, remain active. U.S.-led military operations continue. Travel in all areas of Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, is unsafe due to military operations, landmines, banditry, armed rivalry among political and tribal groups, and the possibility of terrorist attacks, including attacks using vehicular or other Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and kidnapping. The security environment remains volatile and unpredictable.

Presidential elections occurred on October 9, 2004 with minimal disruptions. However, the potential for violence remains a real concern. In the wake of the elections, a suicide grenade attack killed an American citizen in downtown Kabul, and three U.N. international staff were kidnapped in late October 2004. Presidential inauguration events in early December may trigger additional violence.

There have been a number of attacks on international organizations, international aid workers, and

foreign interests and nationals in the past year. The United Nations has resumed operations, which were temporarily suspended in the aftermath of these attacks. However, the UN continues to be the target of attacks throughout the country. In June 2004, a UN and NGO convoy was ambushed in Gardez, a UN demining team was ambushed with rocket propelled grenades (RPGS) in Loghar, and a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy was ambushed with RPGS and small arms fire in Kandahar. Over the past year there have been multiple rocket attacks in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan, including a rocket that landed in a field opposite the Embassy compound in October 2004 and another that landed in the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) compound near the Embassy in June 2004.

Family members of official Americans assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul are not allowed to reside in Afghanistan. In addition, unofficial travel to Afghanistan by U.S. Government employees and their family members requires prior approval by the Department of State. From time to time, the U.S. Embassy places areas frequented by foreigners off limits to its personnel depending on current security conditions. Potential target areas include key national or international government establishments, international organizations and other locations with expatriate personnel, and public areas popular with the expatriate community. Private U.S. citizens are strongly urged to heed these restrictions as well and may obtain the latest information by calling the U.S. Embassy in Kabul or consulting the embassy website below. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, bombings, assassinations, carjackings, rocket attacks, assaults or kidnappings. Possible threats include conventional weapons such as explosive devices or non-conventional weapons, including chemical or biological agents.

The United States Embassy cannot provide visa services, and its ability to provide emergency consular services to U.S. citizens in Afghanistan is limited. Afghan authorities also can provide only limited assistance to U.S. citizens facing difficulties.

U.S. citizens who choose to visit or remain in Afghanistan despite this Travel Warning are urged to pay close attention to their personal security, and avoid rallies and demonstrations. They are also encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Afghanistan. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the U.S. Embassy. Registering makes it easier for the Embassy to contact Americans in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at Great Masood Road between Radio Afghanistan and the Ministry of Public Health (the road is also known as Bebe Mahro (Airport) Road), Kabul. The phone number is (93-20) 230-0436. The Embassy website is <http://usembassy.state.gov/Afghanistan>.

Updated information on travel and security in Afghanistan may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States, or for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. For further information, please consult the [Consular Information sheet for Afghanistan](#) and the current [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement](#), all of which are available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.